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ENGLISH TITLE OF TRANSLATION NOTES ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BOLIVIAN ARMY IN THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CASTRO-COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS OF CHE GUEVARA FROM MARCH UNTIL THEIR LIQUIDATION IN OCTOBER, 1967.		PAGE NUMBERS TRANSLATED FROM ORIGINAL DOCUMENT all	
FOREIGN TITLE OF TRANSLATION APUNTES SOBRE LAS EXPERIENCIAS DEL EJERCITO DE BOLIVIA EN SU LUCHA CONTRA LAS GUERRILLAS CASTROCOMUNISTAS DEL CHE GUEVARA DESDE MARZO HASTA SU LIQUIDACION EN OCTUBRE DE 1967.			
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<p>I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u></p> <p>It has already become part of history that the Cuban Castro-Communists have tried for several years to change the internal order of the countries of the Latin-American Continent by exporting their Communist ideology to them and to convert these countries into new Communist states. Fidel Castro, encouraged by the initial success this has had in his own country and having enhanced his image on the international level through a very skillful propaganda, was the first to be taken in by his own work, believing that the guerrillas who were trained and organized in Cuba would be invincible anywhere they would appear on the Latin American Continent. He believed that his slogan "IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY REVOLUTIONARY TO MAKE REVOLUTION" would be a panacea for converting, from one day to the next, the peasants, workers, and middle-class people into legendary figures of Communist subversion in Latin America.</p> <p>The direct or indirect support this has received by the so-called Democratic press on the continent has, in the eyes of public opinion, lent the figures of Castro, Che Guevara, and other Communist leaders a great prestige and importance, presenting them in many cases as the representatives of a new generation who interpret more realistically the desires of the people and of the majorities of the Continent.</p> <p>Acting as journalists and correspondents, many activists had free access to all the countries on the Continent, and thereby became a threat to the internal security of our countries; however, they remained unapprehended because they were exploiting the freedom of speech and expression which we consider essential in our Democratic spirit. That was the case with Regis Debray, Ciro Bustos, and others, but especially with the former, who called himself a journalist but was one of the main activists among the guerrillas in Bolivia. At the beginning of his trial, he denied his direct participation, but later, when Che Guevara was killed at the climax of the guerrilla drama, he called himself a collaborator and a participant in the acts of Che Guevara and then deplored the fact that he had not had</p>			

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the honor to die near his leader. To the international press, however, which is being influenced skillfully by international Communism, this is meaningless; the press still insists that the Frenchman is innocent and calls him a victim of Bolivian injustice.

The economic plight of all the widows, orphans, and old men who now feel the absence of those who were sacrificed by the guerrillas, is meaningless to the international press, because they only want the merchandise of the news, which enables many of them to enjoy a happy, comfortable life thousands of miles away from this country Bolivia, which threatened and bloodied by Communists fighting under the premise that the capture of Bolivia would serve Communism as a very good jumping board to leap over onto other countries on the Continent.

So that the truth of what happened in Bolivia may be known and will not be forgotten, the Bolivian Delegation to the Inter-American Defense Board would like to present to the Chiefs of Staff a short summary of the Bolivian Army's experiences in its struggle with and victory over the Castro-Communist guerrillas of Che Guevara, whose activities were brought to an end in less than six months.

## II. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GUERRILLAS

Che Guevara and his guerrillas had the mission to initiate a war in Bolivia as soon as possible in order to seize power and create a Communist regime in another Latin American state.

Their main objective was to break the political isolation in which Communist Cuba lives on the Continent. Once that mission was fulfilled, Cuba would no longer be alone and sooner or later the Cuban movement would also be successful in other countries bordering on Bolivia.

The succession of events has proven the above-said to be true, and in order to demonstrate this, we have summarized them briefly:

When Che Guevara disappeared from public life in Communist Cuba, he created a political phantasm which disturbed public opinion on the Continent and also preoccupied qualified political observers who spent a great deal of time and paper on efforts to explain the fact itself and the possible implications and motives connected with Che Guevara's disappearance.

The first version read that Che Guevara had been sacrificed and killed in Cuba because of the egocentrism of Castro, who did not tolerate any rivals in his power.

It was also said that he had been identified as one of the guerrillas in Guatemala and that he had died in that country.

Some time later it was confirmed that the Government of Nicaragua had plain evidence that he had been killed in that country, in yet another guerrilla effort.

Then, during the struggle of the Peruvian Army against the guerrillas in Peru, it was heard that a foreign newspaper had interviewed Che Guevara somewhere in the Andes.

Finally, international public opinion accepted as the only true version that Che Guevara had been executed in Communist Cuba.

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The events that occurred later in Bolivia demonstrated that Che Guevara, who was looked upon as the principal Communist activist on the Continent, had probably been in various American countries and had entered Bolivia with a false passport under the name Ramon Benitez Gonzales or under the name Adolfo Hena Gonzales; these documents are in the hands of the Armed Forces and were presented to the Foreign Ministers of the OAS at their XIIth Consultative Meeting by the Bolivian Chancellor.

Even these facts were received with great scepticism by the conference and by the press, which noted these incidents with disbelief and thereby manifested its lack of confidence in the government of one of the member nations of our system; the reasons were obvious. We were denouncing a small country that was not understood by its brothers in the Hemisphere.

Later events confirmed what Bolivia had stated; Che Guevara did enter Bolivia in order to organize and direct the guerrilla movement, because he considered Bolivia a very suitable starting point for his mission to Communize the entire continent.

Communist Cuba stands alone and isolated in the middle of a regional, Democratic organization; it is politically weak and may disappear any day as a Communist state. For this reason, other countries must be made Communist, and the one best suited for that purpose is Bolivia. According to Che Guevara and Regis Debray, who claim to know this country well, there is mass poverty among the workers and the peasants, as well as among the lower middle class. They erroneously maintained that the political situation in Bolivia is characterized by constant agitation and that the difficulties the Government is facing are too great for it to master. Che Guevara thought that the guerrilla war would be very short indeed and victory would be his after only a few months. The Communists were practically celebrating their victory before the war had started.

### III. TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION OF THE GUERRILLAS

#### A. The Guerrilla Theoreticians

Che Guevara and his collaborators, among them especially Regis Debray, committed several errors when they studied the conditions in Bolivia in order to carry out their plan of turning this country Communist through guerrilla warfare; these errors showed that they were mere theoreticians of this kind of warfare. That was only the more surprising as Che Guevara's book "Guerrilla Warfare" and Debray's book "Revolution Within the Revolution", works which are highly regarded in that class of literature, advocate principles of guerrilla organization and training which are just as adequate and convincing as those laid down by Castro. However, it became evident through the events in Bolivia that their books had a merely theoretical value for their authors who, once they were guerrilla leaders themselves, forgot their own principles and did not implement them, so that their struggle finally ended very tragically with the death of Che Guevara and the imprisonment of Debray.

#### B. The Recruiting of the Guerrillas

1. Guerrilla leaders: The candidates for guerrilla leader positions were chosen from persons of proven ideological revolutionary convictions and certain aptitudes and qualifications. Yet, the selection made was not too successful: those chosen from the Bolivian guerrillas did not have all the qualities required such as national prestige and the ability to rise among the workers, peasants, teachers, and students, which is necessary, as the Communist language puts it, to attract the masses.

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It seems that the Communists tried to make up for these deficiencies by introducing foreigners into the movement, and in particular qualified members of the Cuban government; according to Castro's experience nationality does not matter in guerrilla circles. The only thing that matters is that the guerrillas are convinced of their cause, which gives them great moral strength in itself. An additional requirement for the guerrilla leaders was that they had to have leader qualities and to be physically strong. In this respect, the Communists made the mistake not to investigate the moral qualities of the Bolivian people, who are very patriotic and automatically reject everything foreign. This was shown by the indifference with which the guerrilla leaders were received by the people in the areas they tried to incite.

2. Experience has shown that not all the leaders of the Communist parties possess the qualities necessary to be guerrilla leaders; they are better qualified to support the guerrillas through permanent agitation in the interior. For that reason no influential Communist politician in the country was involved with the guerrillas. They remained inactive, perhaps in the hope that the guerrillas would succeed in the end; but the truth was that they followed the Moscow line which favors peaceful co-existence and the taking over of power over a long period of time, as was manifested by many participants in the Latin American Solidarity Conference in Havana.

3. The guerrillas, who had been recruited with the promise of high salaries, were organized in centers which set up the future guerrilla groups. Every group contained both people from the different labor sectors who identified clearly with Castro-Communism and also people who knew the areas in which they were going to fight.

4. Other guerrilla groups were established in the villages to set up fronts who would be favorable to the development of the events. These groups would coordinate their actions to support the main guerrillas, while keeping in mind that at any moment the brunt of the guerrilla struggle might fall on them, so that the military units that were sent to fight them would have to disperse their forces, means, and attention.

#### C. Mistakes in the Organization of the Guerrillas

1. The Bolivian guerrilla leader was Roberto Peredo Leigue, called "COCO", and his second was his brother Guido, called "INTI". Both were little known in the country, and their political prestige existed only within Communist circles; neither had held any offices of importance in the Government or in labor. Perhaps their only asset was that they had attended Cuban guerrilla instruction centers and had traveled to the Soviet Union and to Red China. Therefore they had very little influence on the workers and even less on the peasants of the country.

Their names became known only after the national and international press began to inform the world about the guerrilla war on Bolivian ground, and although they were probably rather brave and ideologically convinced of the Communist ideas, their courage only made them instruments of Castroism and their names were known only up to the time when the first of them was killed and the second escaped.

2. The lower level guerrillas who had been recruited from the mines, among the unemployed and the adventurers, as well as a few student volunteers, were not all that convinced of the guerrilla cause; they had been attracted solely by the high salaries offered and by the promise that they would occupy important posts in the government they were going to create after their victory.

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3. The miners, who constitute a large proportion of the population, did not support the guerrillas because they were tired of all the promises they had been made for supporting the politicians and who had been cheated time and again over the years. As a result the Communist efforts to recruit people in the mining areas failed.

4. The peasants have not been unsatisfied since the agrarian reform was implemented; they now own the land they work on, and so the Communists had nothing to offer them in the way of revolutionary struggle. Quite contrary to what the Communists had hoped, the peasants asked the Government to fight the guerrillas. This was the reason for the total absence of peasants among the guerrillas.

5. The capture of Regis Debray, the "DANTON" of Che Guevara, who had left to organize the support of the Communist groups in the cities, professional and otherwise, constituted a serious problem for Che Guevara, who then saw his mission to communize Bolivia fail. His intention to recruit more people was frustrated by the capture of Debray, because the people who had been lined up in the cities were beginning to fear for their own lives after they had seen how quickly the War Council was formed that tried the Frenchman.

#### IV. THE GUERRILLAS' MEANS OF INTELLIGENCE

##### A. The "Net of Contacts"

The guerrillas' net of Communist contacts and information agents consisted of people who had worked for the Government in the press agencies and in some ministries, and also of independent professionals who enjoyed a high prestige in the major cities of the country.

Other agents were planted in the universities, especially women students who under some pretext or other traveled to Cuba, especially to the Youth Festivals, as the indoctrination courses prepared by Castro came to be called.

All these agents are known by the name of "enlaces" (contacts) and their job was to keep the guerrillas informed about Government acts that were directed against the guerrillas, as well as about the activities of the Armed Forces in the interior of the country, so that they were always aware of the exact situation and could avoid a direct confrontation with our military units.

One of the most important contacts of the guerrillas in Bolivia was Miss Loyola Guzman, a student, who managed the funds for the support of the guerrillas. When she was arrested, \$28,000 were found in her possession, quite a considerable sum that gives us some idea of the activities carried on by these contacts.

For their contacts and messages they used a special code that had been prepared in Cuba, and was later found by the Army. This code was employed mainly for their communications with Cuba.

##### B. Strategic Information

This type of information includes communications to Che Guevara about the impact the guerrilla movement had internationally, i.e., on the entire Continent, and also about their impact in Bolivia itself.

The studies and information concerning the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions of the countries on the Continent, and in Bolivia in particular, were compiled in accordance with a formula that had been sent to the agents as preparation for the First Latin American Solidarity Conference; this task was not difficult or dangerous, as all the international organizations for cooperation and development aid publish regularly the results of their research and studies on each country; these reports are at the disposal of the Communist agents, who use these documents for their own ends.

C. International Traffic of "Contacts"

The intelligence agents were dispatched from Cuba, the USSR, and from other European Communist countries, using differing air routes, and avoiding passage through Communist countries. This maneuver was made easy by the density of tourist traffic on the international lines; these agents traveled disguised as commercial and cultural agents and as artists or newsmen.

Finally the Communist intelligence system was organized - there were agents dispersed over the entire national territory of Bolivia who were capable of obtaining intelligence on all levels and sectors of the population.

V. LOGISTICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE GUERRILLAS

A. Guerrilla Deposits

In the preparatory phase of the guerrillas, their main concern in their efforts to insure the success of their operations was their logistical support plan for the various guerrilla groups.

This plan was implemented by organizing a net of deposits whose location was kept secret and was known only to the group leaders. The important thing was to disperse these deposits in such a manner as to supply the guerrillas with food and combat material while they were active in their respective areas.

The initial headquarters at Nancahuazu was a ranch purchased under the name of Roberto Peredo for the organization and training phase; there, the products of the ranch, i.e., agricultural and meat products, were used, and in addition to that the deposits were stocked with goods purchased in nearby villages and ranches at unusually high prices; this was the first indication of the presence of guerrillas in that area.

The utilization of the logistical resources in the deposits was under the direct responsibility of the group leaders; therefore, during their operations the groups made do whenever possible with local resources and with those obtained through assaults on other ranches and small villages, as well as with material captured in their ambushes on the military units.

B. Medical Care

The guerrillas received medical attention from a Peruvian called "Chino" who had come into the guerrilla zone at the very beginning of their organization, bringing with him a good amount of drugs and medical equipment; but he was not sufficiently prepared for the typically tropical climate of that zone which affected all the guerrilla fighters and gave them rashes, and dysentery. Excursions had to be made to the bigger villages to obtain drugs, especially when Che Guevara suffered an attack of chronic asthma.

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### C. Arms and Ammunition

The main source of arms and ammunition was the country itself, as many of the civilian population still possessed the weapons that the government of the so-called National Revolutionary Movement had distributed among the population to defend their revolution in 1952. In 1964, the Army carried out a general requisition in the entire country in order to recover the weapons; this action was very successful, but some unions still managed to hide part of their stocks. The Communist agents bought much of their ammunition and arms from these groups and thus were able to avoid the risk of being identified or detained by international police. However, the Cuban group that entered Bolivia did carry a considerable amount of combat material, including Czech, Russian, and even Chinese models. These weapons lent the guerrillas great combat capability at the beginning and were later captured by the Army.

Apart from the arms and ammunition, the guerrillas had at their disposal great quantities of dynamite and other explosives which they used in their acts of sabotage and in the booby-traps designed to demoralize the troops.

### D. Clothing and Equipment

The typical Cuban guerrilla uniform was used on their first raids; it was made of olive-green kaky-material which did not offer any protection against the climate and especially not against the thorns of the vegetation. The guerrillas therefore had to resort to their civilian clothes or else use the uniforms they captured from the soldiers they had taken prisoners; they were especially interested in their boots.

Because of the isolation of the guerrilla zone which made it difficult for their contacts to reach them continuously, there was no supply of clothing. The Army had established a complete circle around them in order to frustrate their intentions and to submit the guerrillas to total privation, which weakened their combat morale and finally resulted in the destruction of the guerrilla movement in less time than Che Guevara and his chiefs of staff had thought possible. The Bolivian Army knew that the best method to solve the guerrilla problem was to submit them to a regime of complete privation, to pursue them constantly without giving them time to recover, and to close off all routes of escape and food supply.

In its battles against the guerrillas, the Army managed to take prisoners in order to obtain information about the location of the guerrilla deposits; on the basis of that information, the Army had a certain idea about where the guerrillas would be found next and could determine the direction of their own advances.

### E. Experiences of the Bolivian Army

Based on its earlier experiences, the Bolivian Army mounted two operations: the first was called "Operation Cinthya" and was carried out by the units of the 4th Division; their mission was to attack the guerrillas incessantly from the south of Mankahuazu and force them to retreat towards the north and cross the Rio Grande, thereby driving them further and further away from their deposits. In their progress, the military units had to carry out intensive searches to locate the deposits and requisition their contents. The results were very good: great quantities of equipment, including cases and bags with documents and personal effects of many guerrilla fighters, were captured, which permitted the units to identify the guerrillas and above all, identify Che Guevara.

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The second operation was called "Operation Parabano" and was carried out by units of the 8th Division. They were awaiting the guerrillas north of the Rio Grande, prepared to fight and liquidate the guerrilla groups who began to operate on unknown ground. Thus, the guerrillas arrived at Samaipata on the road from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz; this marked the end of the guerrilla initiative. Their destruction began with the ambush of Vado del Yeso, where 14 guerrillas were killed. Earlier, Che Guevara, Coco Peredo, and others had been killed in the battles at La Higuera and Quebrada de Yuro.

## VI. COMBAT METHODS OF THE GUERRILLAS

### A. Combat Echelons

The guerrillas were divided into three echelons:

- Assault echelon (called "advance group" by the guerrillas)
- Support echelon (called "central echelon" by the guerrillas)
- Rescue echelon (called "rear echelon" by the guerrillas).

1. The first echelon was in charge of the general mission of exploration and reconnaissance in the direction of a target fixed by the group leader. When conditions were favorable, this group performed raids that had been planned beforehand and that were well equipped with personnel and arms.

Their attacks were characterized by their suddenness; they tried to capture their targets as quickly as possible, cutting off all access routes to the targets for this purpose and usually acting in the first hours of the morning at at sundown. In order to fulfill their mission as effectively as possible, they would take the pries and the most important men of the village as hostages and thereby force the people to hand over all they asked, foodstuffs, drugs, fuel, etc.

When their mission was completed, they disappeared quickly, obliterating their traces.

In their ambushes on military units, the guerrillas would usually let the column advance until the head had reached a point that allowed the guerrillas to control the entire column up to the rear so that it could be defeated all at once. The first step was to kill the leaders as a means of demoralizing the soldiers, to take prisoners and requisition their weapons, ammunition, uniforms, boots, and whatever could be useful to the guerrillas.

2. The support echelon was displayed only when it was obvious that the enemy unit was stronger than their own; when this was not the case, it was broken up to cover and close off the paths and escape roads and to isolate the military units completely. The need to keep their own strength hidden made it necessary that the secondary echelon was never seen, neither when the prey was taken, nor when the dead and wounded of the military troops were collected, nor even in taking care of the prisoners.

3. The rear echelon had the basic mission of obliterating any trace left by the other two, either during an advance, or after a battle. This was facilitated by the sporadic nature of the guerrilla actions, which occurred always at different places, in different areas, and at varying periods of time.



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B. Types of Action

1. During the organization period in their Headquarters of Nancahuazu, the guerrillas administered an accelerated training program to the personnel recruited in Bolivia, focusing on the coordination of the various missions that the individual guerrilla groups would carry out, and teaching them above all to perform raids and set up ambushes, while at the same time trying to get the personnel acclimatized to the tropics in the jungle which they had chosen as their field of operations.

This training was completed by a thorough political indoctrination using the books of Che Guevara and Regis Debray; this mission seems to have been the responsibility of the latter.

2. Once their operations had begun, the guerrillas tried at all cost to maintain their base of operations at Nancahuazu, which they favored because of its good natural defenses. It was located on the natural obstacle of the Rio Grande and the mountain ranges that line the river. However, the constant actions of the military units, who managed to penetrate the zone, obliged them to abandon their base.

3. Forced by the circumstances, the guerrillas did not have any fixed camps; they moved on continuously, marching 18 hours a day and allowing only 5 minutes of rest every hour.

4. They camped only after an express order of the guerrilla commander and never stayed longer than a few hours. They set up their camps one hour after sundown, put up their hammocks, and between 11 and 12 p.m. prepared their food, which consisted of a hot ration.

5. At 5 a.m. they became active again, they breakfasted and packed their rations and equipment within 30 minutes in order to move on as soon as possible.

6. During the night the security service consisted of two pairs of posts at elevated places overlooking the access paths to the camp.

7. During the day, patrols of two were sent into all directions, but only a short distance, to maintain security.

8. The details such as general direction of movement and the targets to be reached were explained to the guerrillas only minutes before the beginning of the march. This secrecy was essential for the success of their operations in accordance with their doctrines.

C. System and Methods of Radio Transmission of the Guerrillas1. Radio Equipment

At least three types of radio equipment were used:

a. Equipment for high-frequency radio for Che Guevara's use in communicating with his contacts in Communist Cuba, from where he received the support for his activities. This equipment was managed by "Tania", who received the messages in code and did not communicate them to anyone except Che Guevara.

b. A radio of the infantry battalion type for Che Guevara's communication with the guerrilla groups in other areas.

c. Other minor equipment for use among one guerrilla group.

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## 2. Methods of Use of Their Equipment

a. For the use of the high-frequency equipment, there was a fixed schedule appr. as follows:

First contact: 8 a.m.  
Second contact: 1 p.m.  
Third contact: 7 p.m.

It is certain that these contacts were used to receive information from Cuba and from the interior of the country; they lasted only a few minutes each to avoid detection and blocking. The frequency was changed constantly.

## 3. Other Means of Transmission

These are not known, but it is understood that there were daily bulletins which constituted another method of conveying information. The military units captured bulletins from La Paz with very recent dates, which were brought in by special envoys.

## VII. SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN THE INTERIOR ZONE

To prepare the ground for the guerrilla movement of Che Guevara, a series of subversive activities were planned in the major cities and centers of economic activity in the country. They eagerly sought the support of the miners, peasants, and above all of the teachers and students. They sought for motives to incite strikes, and public demonstrations were arranged by Communist agents with the intention to weaken the influence of the Government in the entire country. However, the measures taken by the Government frustrated the effects that had been hoped for. In the end, the Army and the Government were the victors and law and order was reestablished in a short period of time.

The "Shadow of Doubt", which was skillfully spread by the Communist press, was the fundamental objective pursued in order to discredit Bolivia and her Government nationally and internationally. It did have its effects at the beginning of the guerrilla war; the Communists tried to show that the Government is tyrannical and that it uses the Armed Forces only to suppress the people; they tried to show that it lacks public support; their audacity went as far as to create an atmosphere of distrust even among the legislators of other countries, such as the United States of America, where many legislators are asking whether the US policy of military aid to Latin America is not perhaps wrong after all; they hear that many times the arms and equipment that they send us are not used primarily to serve internal security, but rather to suppress the people; this, of course, serves the aims of the Castro-Communists, who want to see this aid reduced or eliminated completely in order to weaken our armed forces and turn our countries into good breeding-grounds for Communist subversion and their take-over.

After the tragedy, the "show of the doubt" is still confusing international public opinion; the Communists are still trying to blind the average citizen, and to obscure the Communist danger. Therefore we Bolivians say that we had every right to fight Castro-Communism, to kill the main activist Che Guevara and his chiefs of staff, thereby eliminating a great danger for the Interamerican System; we also fight against a hostile propaganda which is skillfully directed from Cuba and which never tires of hurling invective at the honor of our countries and their governments, trying to make those look like victims who shed blood on so many countries, sacrificing millions of people in their mad obsession to bring about a paradise that was proclaimed more than 100 years ago.

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Bolivia, her Government, and her Armed Forces have fulfilled their mission to defend the integrity of the Interamerican System and the principles of the Charter of the Organization of American States, in a demonstration of the high Democratic spirit.

[signed:] Carlos Hurtado Gomez  
Colonel, Army of Bolivia  
Delegate to the IADB.

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(C/NFD) This report forwards an interrogation report of officers of Company B, 2nd Ranger Battalion, pertaining to this unit activity in the guerrilla zone and the death of Ernesto (CHE) Guevara. The attached report was prepared by an Intelligence Officer with the U.S. MTT who trained the 2nd Ranger Battalion in counterinsurgency operations. The NOFORN caveat is used for the protection of Source and the sensitiveness of the information.

(C) FIELD COORDINATION: Embassy.

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